

**Virginia Invasive Species Council – Advisory Committee  
Life Sciences Building  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
September 1, 2005**

**Virginia Invasive Species Council Advisory Committee Members**

Bryan Watts, CCB William & Mary  
Chris Asaro, Virginia Department of Forestry  
James Akerson, National Park Service  
Sarah Upshur, Garden Clubs  
Bill Bolin, Dominion VP  
Dave Byrd, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
P.L. Hipkins, Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension  
Scott P. Johnson, Virginia Department of Transportation  
John Scrivani, Virginia Department of Forestry  
Kevin Heffernan, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Tom Smith, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Ray Fernald, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
Pam Dinkle, Tri-County Lake Advisory Committee  
Peter Smallwood, University of Richmond  
Steve Nash, University of Richmond  
Mary Williams, Nursery Industry  
Frank Fulgham, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Ruth Douglas, Virginia Native Plant Society  
Jennifer Allen, The Nature Conservancy  
Jan Ferrigan, Virginia Cooperative Extension  
David Fuss, MPPDC  
Greg Garman, Virginia Commonwealth University  
Rachel Muir, USGS

**DCR Staff**

Michael R. Fletcher

**Others**

Rex Springsten, Richmond Times-Dispatch

**Welcome**

Greg Garman welcomed everyone to Virginia Commonwealth University.

Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Garman for hosting the meeting as well as covering the parking and lunch. He welcomed members and thanked them for attending.

Mr. Smith said that the goal for the meeting was to make progress on the statewide Invasive Species Management Plan. He noted that Kevin Heffernan has taken the lead on developing a draft plan.

Mr. Smith said staff had been working on the draft plan over the last several months. The plan being presented offers a starting point to get everyone's feedback regarding the strengths and weakness and to identify the priorities.

Mr. Smith turned the meeting over to Mr. Heffernan.

Mr. Heffernan said that the draft plan presented was a starting point to work through. He suggested that the committee work through the plan. A copy of this draft plan is available from DCR.

Mr. Heffernan noted that page 29 of the draft plan was an empty grid labeled "Recommendations for Implementation." He said that would be where the members of the committee would play a key role. The committee should identify for the Council the next steps. He noted that, since there is no designated funding, the committee could identify those issues that are already being addressed by the various agencies.

Mr. Heffernan said that the Council could encourage funding and legislation in the next round of budget deliberations.

He noted that the Florida plan and the Canadian plan were used as resources in the development of this draft plan.

Mr. Smith referenced the National Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force as the umbrella organization for aquatic invasive species. Virginia has agreed to participate in the formation of a regional aquatic nuisance issues group along with the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Marine Resource Commission. The first step for this group is to have a statewide management plan that is approved at the national level. The development of this statewide plan dictated in part the format for the draft invasive species management plan.

Mr. Fulgham said that a lot of the work was in line with the action plans that VDACS and USDA have been involved with in addressing these issues. The guidelines and goals are very similar.

Mr. Heffernan said that coordination of the various plans is one of the goals and was listed as the first section of the plan. He noted that the seven items for consideration were not listed in order of importance and that the education component could be included with each issue.

Mr. Heffernan reviewed the Table of Contents in the draft plan. He said that written comments on the introduction would be welcomed.

Mr. Smith said that DCR did not want to assume that the nine invasive species listed were the top priorities. He said the examples were given to show the scope of the issues.

Mr. Heffernan said that if the committee develops a top ten list of invasive species that could be included

Mr. Heffernan lead a discussion of the seven stated goals.

### **GOAL I: Coordination.**

The scope and complexity of the invasive species challenge is such that it summons the strengths of different government agencies and private organizations in different ways. Not all will conduct control or restoration activities, nor will all be directly engaged in prevention measures. All stakeholders will not always agree on all issues. Nevertheless, the goals of this plan require understanding of the views and roles of each stakeholder and ongoing cooperation, communication, and dialog. Further, there needs to be a thorough analysis of roles and responsibilities and their supporting legislation regarding invasive species. Gaps in authority and funding can then be identified. Last but not least, there must be strong monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the goals, strategies and actions called for in this plan. Monitoring and evaluation will provide measures of success toward reaching goals and information for future iterations of this plan.

Mr. Heffernan said that the survey sent to members was an informal approach to coordination. He said that it would be beneficial to identify the broad swath of jurisdictions and authorities.

Mr. Akerson said that rather than listing the jurisdictions and authorities in the document it would be better to work these out on a case by case basis as the respective laws come into play.

Mr. Hipkins said that, while it should be applied on a case by case basis, it would be helpful to have the laws identified in advance.

Mr. Fernauld said that with issues that arose in the past few years, for example the zebra mussels, that DGIF got involved, but it was not clear who should be the lead on a particular issue.

Mr. Fulgham said that VDACS has been involved in other aspects since 9/11. USDA and DEQ used to be the primary contact for animals coming into ports. Since 9/11 this responsibility has been transferred to the Department of Homeland Security. The transition was difficult because the appropriately trained individuals were not in place. Now there is a working group for coordination. Also, he said there should be a

distinction as to whether an invasive species was brought intentionally. He noted that some of the items of concern could be used by terrorists for the disruption of crop production. If an item of concern is brought intentionally it becomes a matter for Homeland Security. If it does not appear that terrorism is involved, the matter is turned over to the federal or state authorities.

Mr. Akerson said that the different code sections could be included in the appendix. It would also be helpful to establish a flow chart of responsibility.

Mr. Smallwood noted that the committee has conducted a survey that includes much of the needed information. He asked what level of expertise was needed to process the information.

Mr. Smith said that the matter should be addressed in two stages. First, is where the agencies are on current responsibilities and legislation on the books. It would be a fairly in-depth study to determine where there are gaps in the system. He noted that it would take legal expertise to determine authority in the event that invasive species are discovered on private property.

He noted that the second step would involve action that should be specifically addressed in the management plan.

Mr. Scrivani suggest that review of the Office of the Attorney General would be important.

Mr. Heffernan summarized that what he was hearing from the committee was that the plan should include a narrative of the understandings of the jurisdictions and include as an action item the development of a legal or legislative review team.

Regarding Action 1.1.2 which states "Identify jurisdictional, legislative, and funding needs for invasive species prevention, detection, response, control, research and education," Ms. Allen said that the identification of funding needs might be a separate process.

The committee agreed to add Action 1.1.3 to address funding needs.

Regarding Action 1.2.2. that suggests establishing the Virginia Invasive Species Council as a permanent body, Mr. Heffernan said that there was legislation in the works to extend the Council to 2012. Current legislation says that the Council sunets in 2006. A proposal is being sent for the Governor's consideration.

Mr. Smith said that the respective agencies are discussing funding needs with their Cabinet Secretaries.

Mr. Nash suggested that items 1.2.2. and 1.2.3 be moved to the top of the list for this section. He said that without the appropriate staff in place, there was no option for implementation.

The committee agreed to this change.

Regarding Strategy 1.3, Mr. Smith said that the plan would clarify that the Council, through the Secretary of Natural Resources, annually reports to the General Assembly.

## **GOAL 2: Prevention**

Preventing introduction of invasive species is the most cost effective means to avert or reduce the risk of harmful infestations. Investment in prevention avoids the long-term economic, environmental, and social costs associated with invasive species infestations. Preventative actions would seek to verify authorized introductions, detect and interrupt illegal introductions and unintentional introductions by monitoring key pathways. Prevention requires state agency support and cooperation with federal agencies' tasked with similar responsibilities at the border and beyond. Implementation of preventative measures may require broadening legislative mandates, strengthening the capacity of some departments, and refining or consolidating legislative and regulatory tools. Prevention also includes increased public awareness of the invasive species issues. Educating key resource user groups is an important part of prevention efforts and is address in Goal 7.

Mr. Heffernan noted that "pathway vector" would be included in the glossary.

Ms. Douglas asked about an alternative approach. She said that it is difficult to keep people out, much less animals, plants and diseases.

Mr. Fulgham said that authorities at the ports will only stop items prohibited at the federal level.

Mr. Asaro asked if, in the case of sudden oak death, if every plant was being inspected.

Mr. Fulgham said that visual inspections are being conducted.

Mr. Nash endorsed the idea of setting up a system to assess new introductions. He said that, for example, in New Zealand, the supplier has to pay for the study to show that a product is safe.

Mr. Smallwood asked if the concept was to have both an approved and disapproved list for the introduction of species.

Mr. Heffernan said that would be part of the proposal. He noted that estimates are that \$140 billion per year is being lost to invasive species.

Mr. Fernald said that DGIF regulations allow the introduction of a species unless it is specifically prohibited.

Mr. Mann said that the purpose of a disapproved list is to highlight the species already known and the sources of potentially invasives. The list is an educational tool that indicates that the enforcement system does not work.

Mr. Akerson said that the purpose of the approved list was to keep importers from introducing new problematic species.

### **GOAL 3: Early Detection.**

When invasive species elude preventative actions and enter Virginia, early detection is the next line of defense. Early detection consists of monitoring for invasive species around critical pathways, protected areas, and urban and agricultural ecosystems. Monitoring of invasive species also supports several other strategic needs: it evaluates prevention and control programs, and provides information on invasion patterns and future management needs. Taxonomic expertise is an essential component of early detection efforts.

With regard to Strategy 3.1, "Identify current early detection programs/networks and existing gaps in coverage and funding," the committee noted that the programs currently are not networked.

Ms. Muir said that some of the most effective networks are volunteer.

Mr. Byrd said it would be helpful to have a clearinghouse for information. The system could be set up to notify members if a species is detected in a given area.

It was noted that it would be helpful to identify the areas to be monitored rather than assuming the monitoring of the entire state. It is a matter of getting the individual stakeholders educated as to where they fit into the system.

### **GOAL 4: Rapid Response**

When invasive species are detected by monitoring systems, it is essential to respond rapidly, before they become established, spread and cause harm. Delay in response can lead to higher costs of control and management. Integrated rapid response programs are required. The objective of rapid response is containment or eradication of the target species. State, federal, and local agencies, and nongovernmental organizations need to coordinate response activities. Rapid

response programs must be guided by contingency plans and supported with emergency funding.

The committee agreed that a list of potential high priority invasive species introductions should be developed and targeted by rapid response.

Mr. Fulgham said this should be incorporated into the state emergency plan under the state homeland security system.

Under Strategy 4.3 the committee added a action to identify available fund sources.

### **GOAL 5: Control and Management**

Established invasive species require control through eradication, containment, or other management strategies to minimize environmental and economic impacts. Management objectives may include eradication within an area, population suppression, limiting spread, and reducing impacts. Control measures may include mechanical, chemical, biological, and integrated pest management strategies. In managed ecosystems, restoration is an essential component of control to prevent an invader from re-invading a site or new invaders from becoming established. Adequate funding, public awareness, and management expertise are critical to success.

Ms. Muir noted that the plan was directed at wildlands and natural resources, but that it should also be directed to agricultural areas and waterways.

### **GOAL 6: Research and Risk Assessment**

Research supports all facets of the management plan. Basic research and highly targeted applied efforts are required for effective prevention, detection, response, and control. A vast amount of research on invasive species has been done in recent years in Virginia, the U.S., and around the world, and more is underway.

Ms. Muir suggested that this section needed revisions. She suggested using the resources of the USDA, the Forest Service and the USGS.

Ms. Upshur said that there needed to be a way to stimulate interest in the education sector.

Mr. Asaro said it was a larger issue since universities are moving toward more of a focus on biotechnology.

Ms. Dinkle suggested a library of case histories be included in the appendices.

## **GOAL 7: Education and Outreach**

Educating the general public and special interest groups, such as commercial importers and agricultural producers, on the impact of invasive species will result in greater citizen involvement and support for all other goals of this plan. General outreach and specialized training programs are required.

Mr. Heffernan acknowledged that the discussion of this goal could go on indefinitely.

Mr. Byrd said that it was important to include what technical assistance is available.

Mr. Hipkins said that the committee had acknowledged that the education component is part of all of the previously stated goals. He said that this area needed more emphasis.

### Implementation Table

Mr. Heffernan lead a discussion regarding the Implementation Table contained on page 29 of the draft plan.

The committee acknowledged that much of this table is dependent upon the renewal of the Council beyond 2006.

### Wrap Up

Mr. Smith lead a wrap up discussion for the meeting. He noted that currently any work needs to be completed by the participating agencies within the next 12 months.

Strategies were discussed for the continuation of the Council.

Staff agreed to revise the plan based on the discussion of the committee.

Mr. Smith said that he hoped a meeting of the Invasive Species Council could be held before the end of the calendar year.

The meeting was adjourned.